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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. FOSSELLA).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
February 10, 2005.

I hereby appoint the Honorable VITO FOSSELLA to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer:

Lord, guide the minds and hearts of the Members of the House of Representatives today as they sort out and prioritize the massive work before the 109th Congress. Strengthen their determination as they commit themselves to the difficult task of meetings and committee work. May mutual respect and civility prevail in all their discussions.

In every issue to be addressed or any problem to be resolved, let Members turn to You in prayer so to draw from Your holy inspiration and true creative thinking.

By Your constant guidance further their work until it is brought to completion. Then the American people will rejoice because their hopes for equal justice under the law are realized, and the security and prosperity of this Nation are really fashioned by Your hand now and forever. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. PALLONE led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain up to 5 1-minute speeches on either side.

IRAQ ELECTION

(Mr. FOLEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FOLEY. Mr. Speaker, last week the people of Iraq risked life and limb to vote. They showed the world that freedom and self determination were things worth fighting and dying for.

The people of Iraq have spoken and in doing so, have undermined the terrorists who claim to be the true representatives of the Iraqi people.

No one expects the transition to representative government to be easy. After winning independence from Britain, it took our Founding Fathers years to draft and adopt a constitution that brought together the widely different factions that comprised the original 13 colonies.

There is one thing that is beyond dispute. The overwhelming majority of Iraqis want to live in a free and tolerant society. They have no use for the discarded Saddam and his henchmen.

As this editorial cartoon shows, a seed of democracy has been planted in the very heart of the Middle East. As Iraq continues to defeat the terrorists and build a flourishing society, the other oppressed peoples of this troubled region will demand and seize the same freedom for themselves. The mullahs of Iran should take note and realize that their people will throw them out sooner or later.

Again, I wish to congratulate the people of Iraq on their successful election.

VETERANS HEALTH CARE BUDGET

(Mr. STRICKLAND asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, the President has sent his budget dealing a blow to veterans health care, and I would like to share with you what the veterans' organizations across the country think about it.

Paralyzed American Veterans say the release of the 2006 budget request by the administration demonstrates a callous disregard for the services of America's veterans.

The VFW says the President has delivered a disappointing funding request for the Department of Veterans Affairs. This budget will cause veterans' health care to be delayed.

The DAV, the Disabled American Veterans, says the administration has proposed one of the most tight-fisted, miserly budgets for veterans' programs in recent memory. As a result, VA facilities across the country are cutting staff and limiting services even as the number of veterans seeking care is on the rise.

The American Legion says veterans' health care is an ongoing expense of war. You do not thank veterans for serving their country and then tell them, Oh, by the way, you had better

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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